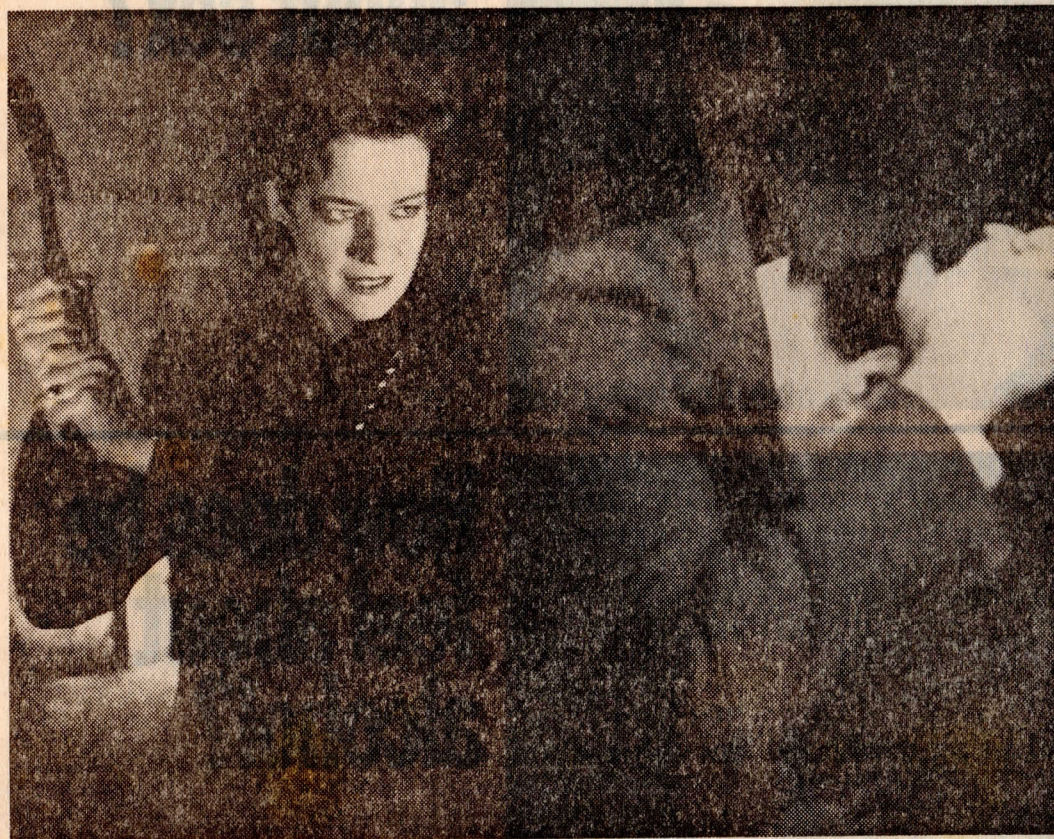


MOVIES

with JIM SANDERSON

Mystery cube holds key to 'shocker'



JULIA (Clare Higgins) takes the hammer to yet another victim to satisfy Frank's blood lust in Hellraiser.

★★ **HELLRAISER (M):** George. Stars Andrew Robinson, Clare Higgins, Ashley Laurence, Sean Chapman.

After the credits of Hellraiser roll on, our attention focuses on an ornate box with exotic carvings. Hands with the dirtiest fingernails you ever saw place a wad of banknotes on the table before the box and a transaction begins.

"What's your pleasure, Mr Cotton?" asks a Chinese in his purring oriental voice.

"The box," comes the reply as the money changes hands.

"Take it, it's yours," says the Chinese, and then, as an afterthought, adds, "but then it always was."

You don't have to be a Rhodes scholar to realise that we have a mystery on our hands here, or that this oriental Rubic Cube will play a big part in the story which is about to unravel.

The owner of the dirty fingernails is Frank Cotton (Sean Chapman), a knockabout adventurer who can't wait to get home to solve the riddle of the cube.

You also don't have to be a Rhodes

scholar to guess that unspeakable horrors will result in the riddle being solved.

Down in the cellar of his creepy old house, Frank experiences the horrors and pleasures of hell at the hands of a group of misfits called Cenobites. Led by a gruesome character who looks as though he has been interrupted during acupuncture, the Cenobites strip all the flesh from Frank and leave him scattered all over the floor in little pieces.

To our blessed relief, the tempo of the movie changes, with Frank's brother Larry (Andrew Robinson) and his wife Julia (Clare Higgins) moving in.

Although Larry is excited about the idea, Julia is not so sure.

It turns out, though, that she and Frank had shared a torrid affair way back, and she still thinks fondly of him.

Now we get down to the good bits. When Larry gashes his hand badly, the blood forms a pool on the floor and seeps through to the remains of Frank below.

Apparently this acts as a sort of fertiliser, and before you can say "Stephen King," an embryonic Frank starts popping up through the floorboards like bean shoots.

First one to stumble on this yukky manifestation is Julia who is horrified at first but then finds herself agreeing to help. This means keeping up a supply of blood to flesh out Frank's skeletal form and making him whole again.

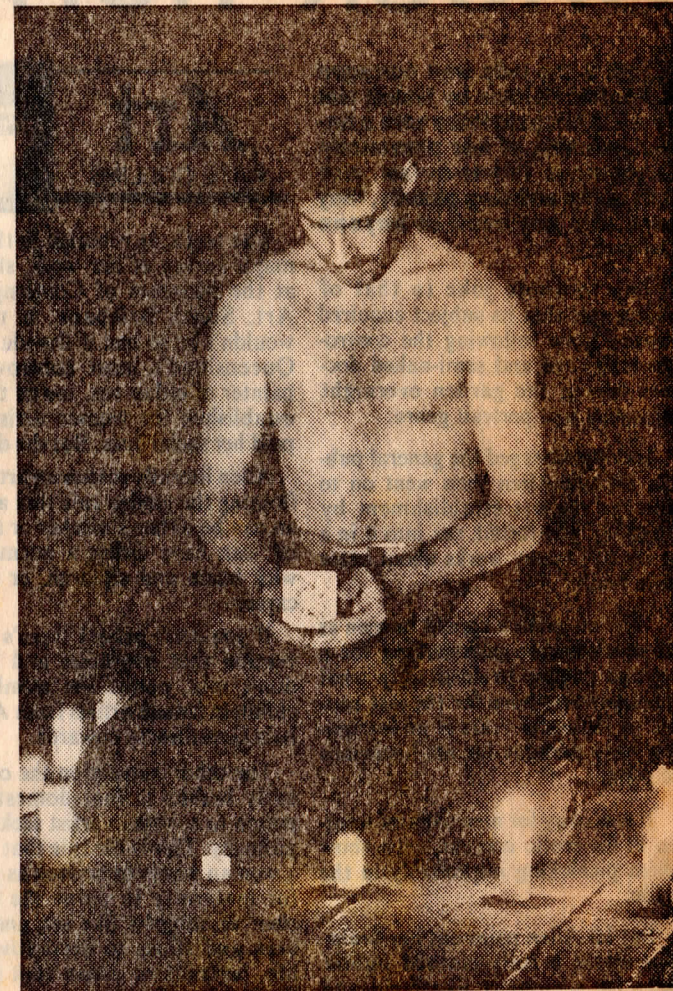
She has little trouble picking up men in bars and then luring them to the house where she waits until they are getting their gear off and then dongs them on the head with a hammer. Frank does the rest, draining their blood and getting stronger and more presentable.

Everything progresses nicely until Larry's daughter Kirsty (Ashley Laurence) pays a visit during one of Frank's feeding times.

So we have the scene set for the movie's big and prolonged climax. Bob Keen, who knows much more than most about special make-up effects, really goes to town, delivering shock upon shock to the already-befuddled viewer.

Those of you who enjoy a good fright will have the time of your lives watching *Hellraiser* while the more cynical viewers will see it all as a bit of a giggle.

Writer/director Clive Barker makes a business out of horror, churning out material which has shocked and enchanted people all over the world.



FRANK (Sean Chapman) about to discover the secrets of mysterious box in Hellraiser.